

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 24-25  
1606514521

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Seneca

Aqueduct

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

mouth of Great Seneca Creek, off River Road

CITY, TOWN

Seneca

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

☐ DISTRICT  
☐ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☒ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

☒ PUBLIC  
☐ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

☐ OCCUPIED  
☒ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

**PRESENT USE**

☐ AGRICULTURE  
☐ COMMERCIAL  
☐ EDUCATIONAL  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT  
☐ GOVERNMENT  
☐ INDUSTRIAL  
☐ MILITARY  
☒ MUSEUM  
☒ PARK  
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

National Park Service-Dep't. of the

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Interior

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1936

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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## CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☒ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The lock here is one of the very few built into the end of an aqueduct. Its walls are lined with the local red sandstone. The aqueduct itself is a very rare feature along the Canal. It is a three-arch span of dressed sandstone, with a flat parapet and low, keystone arches. The westernmost arch collapsed into Seneca Creek after a severe flood in the fall of 1971.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

M:24-25

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 00-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

## SPECIFIC DATES

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This was one of the most active areas on the C & O Canal in this County. It continues today to be a heavily-visited recreational area of the Parks. Important due to its relationship with old milling community of Seneca, its Seneca Sandstone construction and its proximity to related features-such as the River, the turning basin, and the quarry area. (See references on next page.)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

M:24-25

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- 1) Sween, Jane. "Seneca", MONT. CO. STORY, Mont. Co. Hist. Society, (1971).
- 2) HISTORY OF POTOMAC, booklet by local Civic Assoc. (1970's)
- 3) Scharf, HISTORY OF WESTERN MD. (1882), Vol. I.
- 4) Hahn, Thos. F. TOWPATH GUIDE TO C & O CANAL. (1971).

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA** (5) SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS. (1976) research sheets.

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

COLLECTOR'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION****LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian

ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

M-NCPPC

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

5/20/74

STREET &amp; NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

8787 Georgia Ave.

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

589-1480

CITY OR TOWN \_\_\_\_\_

Silver Spring

STATE \_\_\_\_\_


Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

1. Name of Landmark: Seneca Creek Aqueduct
2. Location: At the mouth of Great Seneca Creek, about a mile south of River Road.
3. Present use: Park of the C&O Canal National Historical Park.
4. Owner: U.S. National Park Service
5. Date or period built: 1828-1830
6. Architectural description: A three arch, red sandstone canal aqueduct; one arch has collapsed. Of eleven C&O canal aqueducts, the Seneca Aqueduct was the only one made of "Seneca sandstone"; it is the most important canal structure made of sandstone, and one of the most admired canal structures. A few stones in the Aqueduct carry marks of the stone masons who built it. Some of the most prominent are:
 



In the 1870's the Aqueduct had to be partially dismantled and rebuilt; it required further repairs after the destructive 1889 flood. In September 1971 the Aqueduct was damaged by a flash flood on Seneca Creek, and the upstream parapet and arch collapsed a few weeks later. Part of the original wrought iron railing on the Aqueduct survives.
7. Builder: Unknown
8. Original owner: The C&O Canal Company
9. Historic association: Located next to Lock #24 on the C&O canal it is the only Aqueduct contiguous to a lock. The sandstone was quarried from bluffs about a half mile up the Potomac, and cut in the stone mill nearby. The first boats crossed the Aqueduct in the spring of 1833 and from then until the canal closed in 1924, thousands of boats passed over the Aqueduct, including scows that carried sandstone to Georgetown from the nearby quarries. Part of the historic canal community of Seneca, it was used by residents and quarry workman to cross Seneca Creek. It was protected by Union garrisons during the Civil War.
10. Bibliography: 1. Hahn, Tom. C&O Towpath Guide. 1970.  
2. Interview with Ray Riley, former locktender.
11. Researcher: Edwin F. Wesely  
7101 Ridgewood Avenue  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20015

1. Name of Landmark: Seneca
2. Location: Between River Road and the Potomac River; where the Seneca Creek flows into the Potomac River.
3. Present use: The town is a mixture of private homes, waterfront recreation activities, and the C&O Canal National Historic Park.
4. Owner: Mixture of private ownership, the National Park Service, and the State of Maryland: Department of Natural Resources.
5. Date or period built: 1787
6. Architectural description: There are approximately 60 structures in the community; most are cabins along Seneca Creek. The most interesting structures in the area are the C&O Canal with its aqueduct, locks, and lock keeper's house; and the Seneca sandstone quarries and stone cutting mill.
7. Builder:
8. Original owner: Land in this area was first patented to Richard Brightwell on August 29, 1695. In 1787 John Garrett laid out the town of Seneca.
9. Historic association: Seneca - once the land of Indians, then of the early settlers to this Potomac River Frontier, a farming community, canal town, and site of the Seneca quarries. Two of the earliest grants of land in this area were to Richard Brightwell, on August 29, 1695, who used the area as a hunting quarter. The community of Seneca was laid out by John Garrett in 1787. He held a lottery with town lots as the prizes to attract residents. Although his town failed to develop as he had hoped, by 1830 engineering technology had transformed the area into a canal town along the C&O Canal. The prosperity of the town was tied to the canal and to the famous Seneca sandstone, which had been used by Indians in the area and by earlier colonists, but which could now be shipped on the canal to building sites in Washington, including the original Smithsonian Institution buildings. When both the canal and the quarry operations failed in the early 1900's, Seneca declined and today is little more than a store, some houses and weekend cabins along Seneca Creek.
10. Bibliography:
  1. Owen, Claude W. "Seneca, once a commercial center." History of Potomac. 1970. Published by Potomac Almanac.
  2. Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Western Maryland. Vol. 1. Reprinted by the Regional Publishing Company: Baltimore. 1968.

3. Sween, Jane Chinn. "Seneca". The Montgomery County Story. November 1971. Montgomery County Historical Society.

11. Researcher: G. David Ellis  
9307 Longbranch Parkway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

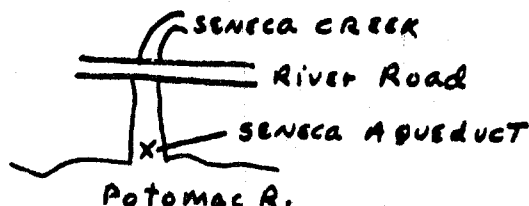
# Sample Landmarks Research Form

Sugarloaf Regional Trail

M: 24-25<sup>9</sup>

1. Name of landmark: Seneca Creek Aqueduct
2. Address: none
3. Other locational data: At the mouth of Great Seneca Creek, about a mile south of River Road.
4. Owner: U.S. National Park Service
5. Description of landmark: A three arch, red sandstone canal aqueduct; one arch has collapsed.
6. Setting: Located next to lock #24 on the C&O Canal, and just below an old canal turning basin and the ruins of the Seneca stone mill. The Potomac River is a few yards south of the Aqueduct, and is very wide and scenic.
7. Other observations: Seneca was a small canal town, and the Seneca area was very prominent during canal days. Nearby are the ruins of the Seneca stone-cutting mill, and the remains of the old sandstone quarries. There are said to many Indian sites nearby.
8. Present use: Part of the C&O Canal National Historical Park.
9. Physical condition of the structure: One arch of the Aqueduct collapsed in 1972; the rest has been stabilized. Stones from the collapsed arch are stored nearby.
10. Approximate acreage: not applicable. There is extensive parkland nearby and around the Aqueduct.
11. Zoning status: On federal land
12. Date or period: built in 1828-1830; later repairs
- Architect: unknown
- Builder: unknown
- Original owner: C&O Canal Company
- Type of construction: local red sandstone and lime mortar
- Architectural style: ??????

13. Locational map:



14. Name and address of researcher: John Doe  
Box 123  
Dickerson, Md. 20753

(301) 661-1234



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## (1) The landmark's history:

The Seneca aqueduct was built with red sandstone quarried from bluffs about a half mile up the Potomac. Construction began in the summer of 1828; work was completed in September 1830; and the first boats crossed the Aqueduct in the spring of 1833. Its use had to wait on water—the Aqueduct was watered from a dam just above the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia—and the canal was not completed to Harper's Ferry until 1833.

Until the canal closed in 1924, thousands of boats passed over the Aqueduct, including scows that carried sandstone to Georgetown from the nearby Seneca quarries.

In the 1870's the Aqueduct had to be partially dismantled and rebuilt; and required further repairs after the destructive 1889 flood.

In September, 1971 the Aqueduct was damaged by a flash flood on Seneca Creek, and the upstream parapet and arch collapsed a few weeks later. The remaining arches were stabilized, awaiting restoration of the Aqueduct.

The U.S. Department of Interior bought the C&O Canal in 1938, and in January 1971 it became a National Historical Park.

## (2) Significance:

- a) Of eleven C&O Canal Aqueducts, the Seneca Aqueduct was the only one made of "Seneca sandstone"; and is the most important canal structure made of it.
- b) It is the only Aqueduct contiguous to a lock.
- c) It was part of the historic canal community of Seneca.

## (3) Notable features:

- a) Part of the original wrought iron railing survives.
- b) On a stone post on the east end of the Aqueduct are a number of marks and inscriptions—among them the names of canal workmen, a Civil War soldier, and a line showing the high water mark of the 1889 flood.
- c) A few stones in the Aqueduct trough carry marks of the stone masons who built it (known as "banker's marks"). Some of the most prominent are:



## (4) Historic relationships:

- a) Part of the historic canal community of Seneca; used by residents and quarry workmen to cross Seneca Creek.
- b) close ties to nearby sandstone quarries and stone-mill
- c) protected by Union garrisons during the Civil War; near site of Rowser's Ford, a famous Civil War crossing.
- d) at the east end of the Aqueduct is lock #24 and its adjoining lockhouse (made of the same sandstone). Ray Riley, whose father tended the lock still lives in the community.
- e) The view from the Seneca Aqueduct is one of the most scenic on the Potomac; and the Aqueduct one of the most admired canal structures.

## (5) Bibliography:

- a) C&O Canal Towpath Guide—Tom Hahn—1970
- b) personal inspection
- c) interview with Ray Riley, former locktender



M: 24-25

M: 24-25  
Seneca Aqueduct  
Seneca Quad, 1968, PR 1980

POTOMAC

MONTGOMERY CO  
LOUDOUN CO

LOWES ISLAND

Old Sugarland

Run

Lowes

Patowmack Island

Elm Island

Grapevine

NORTHERN VIRGINIA

BLOCKHOUSE POINT PARK

Blockhouse Point

CHESAPEAKE

Katie Island

Seneca CREEK

STATE PARK

Seneca

Seneca

Golf Course

Rushville

Lock 23

Lock 24

Picnic Areas

Pond I

Hookers

Branch

Creek

Creek

ROAD

BM 214

ROAD

Mill

MONTEVIDEO

RILEYS LOCK RD

LOCKERS RD

BM 274

TE PARK

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

OHIO CANAL

TOWPATH

TOWPATH